

Audiences' Perception and Engagement with Malaysian Public Broadcaster, Radio Television Malaysia's (RTM) Prime News

Affendi Abdul Karim
Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia

Shifa Faizal
Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia

Sara Chinnasamy
University Teknologi, MARA, Malaysia

Abstract:

Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM), a national broadcasting station in Malaysia has been producing news products ever since the station's establishment in 1946. Initially known as 'Warta Berita', the flagship news programme has been renamed 'Nasional 8'. The trend of watching the news, specifically through television, is changing drastically as the efficacy of new media grew in parallel with developments taking place globally in this Fourth Industrial Revolution. Adopting a qualitative approach, this research aimed to understand Malaysian audiences' perception and engagement with Nasional 8. Participants were selected through purposive sampling and in-depth interview sessions were conducted to explore informants' perceptions and experiences in watching this news programme. The findings revealed interesting themes in relation to the perception, experiences and engagement which the audiences have with Nasional 8. This study also offers a paradigm shift to the Cultivation Theory, as this research indicates that watching television for news happens simultaneously with other media, especially social media. However, television news still holds higher credibility than news presented on social media platforms. The informants also felt that RTM's Nasional 8 provided better means of engagement with its audiences, which they believed is not provided by other prime time TV news. Thus, the findings noted that it is worthwhile for RTM Nasional 8 to focus on approaches to enhance audience engagement with the programme especially via social media. This could both increase its viewer ratings and gain participation from all level of viewers.

Keywords: RTM, Malaysia, Nasional 8, Prime Time News, Perception, Engagement.

Date of Submission: 28-05-2021

Date of acceptance: 10-06-2021

I. INTRODUCTION

Radio Televisyen Malaysia or in short, RTM is the oldest broadcasting station in Malaysia. RTM's history can be traced back 73 years ago with the establishment of Radio Broadcasting Department in Singapore (Singapore was part of Malaya until August 1965 when Singapore was separated from Malaysia). April 1, 1946 formally marked their early operations in Malaya. Only months after Malaysia was formed with the union between liberated British colonies of Malaya (now Peninsular Malaysia), North Borneo (now Sabah), Sarawak, and Singapore, the first Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman launched the country's first television services on December 28, 1963. Though limited to only one television channel, the station operated daily from 6.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m., during which they aired local news among other content such as entertainment (which was normally imported from outside the country). RTM's local news when it first launched, started with four languages, namely Bahasa Melayu (also the national language), English, Mandarin, and Tamil which today expands to include other native languages such as languages from the Sabah and Sarawak Indigenous people the Iban and Kadazan-Dusun. By delivering local news in the languages spoken by significant segments of the society, RTM aims to not only inform and educate the masses, but also to spread unity and harmony among all in the country.

In the early days of production, *Warta Berita* was RTM's inaugural prime time news programme. Initially broadcasted at 7.30 p.m., the segment was later rescheduled to the 9.00 p.m. slot in 1965 (Muhamed Yunus et al., 2010). The programme underwent numerous other changes in its subsequent years, chiefly pertaining to time slots. *Warta Berita* was rescheduled to air at 8.00 p.m. before the station decided to shift the programme again to an hour late in early 2009. By now, it is known by the name *Nasional@1*, and was rebroadcasted back to the 8.00 p.m. slot to comply with audience demand (Utusan Online, 2009). Since its inception, *Warta Berita* has had several name changes – *Berita TV Malaysia* (1970s), *Berita Perdana* (1982),

Warta Perdana (2004), *Nasional@1* (January 2009), *Berita Nasional* (April 2009) and *Nasional 8* (now known as *Berita Perdana* since early 2020). Currently, the news programme is aired on RTM's channel TV1.

As the main news programme, the show has had to overcome numerous challenges and transitional phases to remain relevant with the times. These transformations are testament of RTM's effort and commitment towards filling their own respectful vision and mission, besides ensuring their relevance to the public in the midst of various challenges. As the government agency placed under the auspices of the Ministry of Communication and Multimedia Malaysia (KKMM), RTM is obliged to move forward in line with the rapid development of technologies today and the constantly shifting dynamics of audience behaviour, while executing their official duty as a conveyor of governmental policies to the people. The former Minister of Communications and Multimedia, Gobind Singh Deo believes it is indeed a right and crucial time for RTM to change to meet the market's need, expressing his high expectations on the national broadcast station:

"What we broadcast to the people is very important as it patterns the mindset of the people. Therefore, we have to look at the image of RTM itself. Many have given me feedback that RTM needs to make a drastic change. So, today, I told the (RTM) management to look at our competitors such as CNN and Al-Jazeera which provide interesting items for viewers in this field so that we can attract higher viewership. If the people do not watch our programmes, then we will not be successful." (Bernama, 2018)

To sustain the 'status quo' of their primary objectives, RTM's *Nasional 8* on TV1 needs to remain engaged with the public interest as 'audience focus' is one of the few essential tenets of successful broadcasting. As Thompson (2010) argued, it is pertinent for broadcast stations to know their target audiences so that they can develop services that satisfy the audience's needs, tastes, and lifestyles.

Television audience behaviour is an oft-discussed subject among broadcasting scholars. To examine this phenomenon, George Gerbner and his colleagues developed Cultivation Theory in the 1960s, to investigate the impacts of television on viewers, particularly on violence. Gerbner's study, as cited in Richard and Lynn (2018), proved that television constituted certain beliefs about the reality that is held in common by mass media consumers. Furthermore, the medium is essentially and fundamentally different from other forms of mass media. While the influence is limited, yet television remains powerful in the sense of shaping society's way of thinking and relating. This indirectly links to the present *Nasional 8* as it became a favourite choice among its viewers (Ministry of Communication and Multimedia Malaysia, 2016).

Another distinct feature that sets *Nasional 8* apart from its domestic competitors is that it is the sole prime time news programme in Malaysia that provides sign language interpreting to fulfil a much-needed void for its viewers who are hard of hearing. In parallel with advancements in new media, *Nasional 8* audiences also now have the option to watch it not only through the conventional medium of television, but also through an online platform using *MyKlik* or by using RTM mobile, a smartphone application made available and downloadable on the *App Store* or *Google Play* store. Interactivity is another prominent feature, with *Nasional 8* allowing viewers to interact socially and actively with the programme through the Internet, particularly on their social media platforms on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Reaction and feedback from viewers are natural and expected, as news is a story revolving centrally around human interests. Furthermore, it is in journalism that all facts and people are regarded as equal and equally worthy for news coverage (Patterson & Wilkins, 2014). This foundational principle is in fact embedded in one of the objectives of RTM's New Current Affairs Department, which produces the prime time news programme. The department is responsible to stimulate the people's interest and to give insights into changes in parallel with government policies (Radio Televisyen Malaysia, 2016).

On this point, several conditions could influence audience feedback. For instance, for a news programme that essentially acts as a government mouthpiece, its narrative approach or its exploitation of social media can be considered a tactic to lure audiences, particularly from the younger viewership. The outcome of such a strategy could be presumed to be affecting the societal behaviour in terms of their perception and consumption of the news programme. As a result, this could lead to some questions to be posed such as – What is the audiences' expectation of the programme? How does RTM engage with their audiences to watch the programme, regardless of their political background, among others? Why do the audiences prefer to spend time watching *Nasional 8*? A study conducted by RTM in 2016 can offer some insights. Out of the 1, 937 respondents, 1, 647 or 85 percent were interested in *Nasional 8*, particularly for their coverage on regional news, foreign affairs, among numerous other issues. (Ministry of Communication and Multimedia Malaysia, 2016).

Nevertheless, technology has changed audience behaviour and consumption of television content. As was remarked earlier, the conventional medium of television has transformed drastically amidst the efficacy of new media trends which are in line with global developments in Malaysia's ongoing Fourth Industrial Revolution. This transformation is inevitable; the revolution is an impetus to profound shifts evident across all industries as well as in human attitudes and behaviours' towards new technologies (Schwab, 2016). One of the most striking consequence is in the extended amount of time people spend consuming content on other

communication devices, with the least amount spent on television. A survey conducted by Nielsen Media Research in 2017 found that the technologies of smartphone dominated consumers' time. The gadget is used up to 15.8 hours a week compared to the time consumers spend on other devices at only 2.2 hours a week.

In 2014, the Internet Users Survey conducted by Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) reported similar patterns on viewers' behaviour. The survey reported that Malaysians, regardless whether they are users or non-users of the Internet, spent on average 2.5 hours and 2.2 hours a day watching television through a conventional medium. However, there is an increasing trend of viewers who watch television through an online medium, particularly among those who are Internet-savvy. About 12 percent said that they do it on a daily basis while most of them (39.3 percent) streamed online television a few times in a month (Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, 2015). The internet, therefore, plays a crucial role in Malaysia (Chinnasamy, 2017).

On the subject of audience behaviour in watching television news programme, research in international contexts have found that foreign viewers are also exposed to an abundance of public and commercial television channels. A comparative study of Korean and Dutch viewers revealed that news consumption differs between young adults and older viewers in both states (Wonneberger & Ju, 2017). Compared to the older generation, young adults were found to be spending less time watching television news programmes when more alternative channels have become available in the two countries. However, the attitude was reported to change according to age as young people develop news-viewing habits between the ages of 15 to 24 years-old (ibid. p. 85).

Interestingly, research has shown that Malaysians rely on online sources for their news, over traditional media platforms. The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism reported that more than 50 percent of respondents come across news stories via online platforms, which consist of online news sites and social media. On the other hand, 23 percent of the respondents chose television as their main source of news, with 14 percent choosing the printed newspaper. In other studies, Malaysians are also ranked first in the use of the messaging application, WhatsApp for finding, discussing or sharing of news.

In an environment where media users are moving away from traditional TV towards digital media platforms as sources for information, the question is thus raised on whether or not prime time news is still relevant while exploring viewers' expectations of their favourite news programme.

Research Aims

Based on the arguments presented thus far, this research is aimed at understanding Malay audiences' perception and engagement with RTM's prime time news programme, *Nasional 8*. The descriptions are:

1. To explore media consumption habits of *Nasional 8* audience;
2. To uncover the significance of *Nasional 8* alongside other new media as an information and news platform; and
3. To explore the extent of audience engagement with *Nasional 8*.

Television Audience & Engagement

As television news is a type of broadcasting news, the news content focuses on audio-visuals and are conveyed across the electronic medium. In the early history of television broadcasting, television news was described as having a myriad of elements of a newscaster, news format and a television segment (Green, 1969; Gunter, 1987).

Another important element is that of the prime time news, a term adopted from prime time television. In the United States, the term prime time was conceived during the early days of broadcasting due to differences in time zones (Green, p. 251). However, the term itself also refers to the coveted time slot on which a programme is broadcast, as this would be the time when a large segment of the audience would be expected to tune in. Thus, for advertisers, the prime time is viewed as the most in-demand spot, which encourages intense competition among rival television networks (Halbrooks, 2018).

Yet, in relatively small and developing nation-state of Malaysia, the masses are considered to be the determining factor to the prime time execution. The global marketing research, AC Nielsen reported that the Malaysian prime time viewing starts from 7.00 p.m. to 12.00 a.m. (Nielsen, 2011). In addition, audience engagement is pertinent in the media industry including the broadcasting field. This assessment criterion offers TV owners or news organisations a key to better evaluate their products and service effectiveness. Data gathered from audience engagement can help broadcasting stations to strategies their businesses accordingly and to fulfil market requirements. Moreover, in a highly social digital world, audience involvement through social media platform is also widely recognised as an effective new way to grow the stations' audience base.

Cheng *et al.* (2016) argued that social networking sites have changed traditional broadcasting. Specifically, audience engagement can be assessed from their participation on social media, which plays an important role in promoting television programmes. As research has demonstrated, audience consumption of news products have changed to reflect development in communication technology. behaviour of audiences. The

audience have moved forward en masse from the printed era, and embracing the electronic medium of radio and television, and not to mention the numerous forms of new media. Data from existing studies suggest that society consumes less news from the television platform as they switch to the online medium (Matsa, 2018; Freeman, 2013). Nonetheless, television audience still make up a dominant portion of news consumers. In support of this view, one research posited that the effect of new media dependency over conventional sources is still manageable (Salman et al., 2011).

Data from previous research also indicate that Malaysians still have confidence in television news, citing the credibility of the medium, as well as the reliability to the news items (Wok et al., 2011). This finding was found across audience demographics that included age, gender and ethnicity. In particular, research has concluded that the traditional way for news consumption is still relatively high among young adult males, most of whom are Malays (ibid. p. 27).

The Expansion of Cultivation Theory

This research is informed by George Gerbner's Cultivation Theory, which considers television as an influential medium able to shape audiences' perception of the world. This theory was selected as it remains applicable to reflect *Nasional 8* audiences' perception and belief about the society in which they are living. Specifically, in the context of diverse Malaysia, television could integrate the country's multiracial populace by providing them with common experiences.

The repetitive content on TV constitutes similar messages and images about the society, arguably reflective of the reality of society. Consequently, audiences may be driven to respond to real-life circumstances according to the conditioning they have and continue to receive from television programming. To depict the flow of TV influence, like *Nasional 8* the early model of the Cultivation Theory is shown in Figure 1:

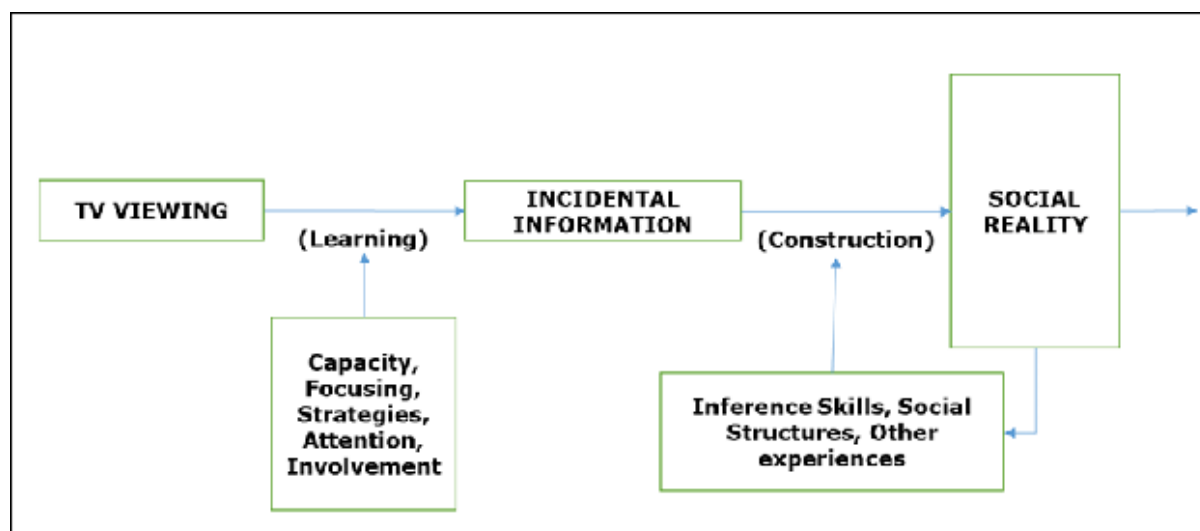


Figure 1: The early model of the Cultivation Theory

Source: (Rosli, et. al., 2017)

Due to the wide changes in terms of people perception and engagement with prime time news, researchers have continuously expanded upon the theory to reflect developments in research and society. Following scholarly tradition, this research has also added the role of social media to the process of information reception and audience use of this information. Simply put, the theory today takes into account a two-way interaction between RTM and its audiences

The utility of social media has already dominated the culture of watching television as it offers a better view of seeing the world. Although social media functions in the same ways as TV, and the added interactive elements have equipped audiences with easily accessible information that can directly educate them about their surrounding world. Television audiences, thus, are presumed to have adapted to the usage of two media at once, while learning about the reality of life. Although the audience might still be watching television, they are more likely to be also simultaneously surfing the web and social media, instead of just focusing on one particular activity for information.

Informants of this research described social media as more useful in helping to shape their way of thinking and relating to the world. This is because audiences of *Nasional 8* can have wider access for information through social media, compared to TV that is relatively limited.

However, with the integration of social media and television among TV viewers today, it can be formulated that both communications activities will always continue to influence public opinion about social reality. To more comprehensively understand the integration of social media into TV viewing as in this study, TV prime time news viewing, the Cultivation Theory model is expanded as shown in Figure 2:

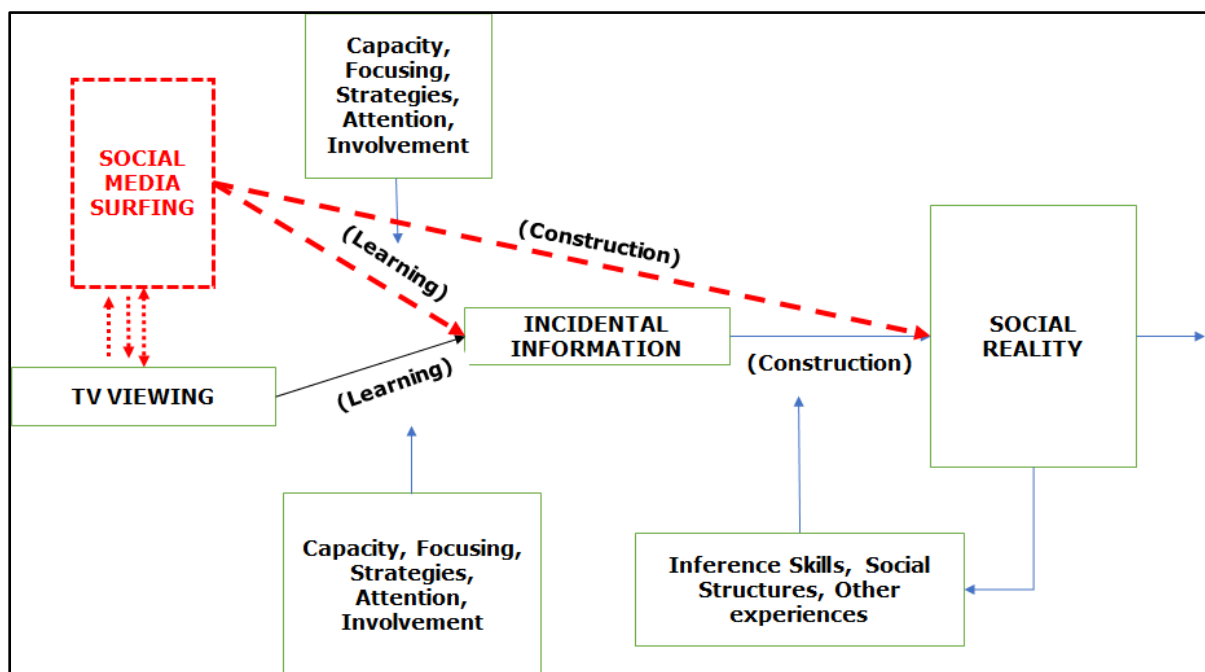


Figure 2: The Expansion of the Cultivation Theory Model

II. METHODOLOGY

The choice of methods and procedures for gathering, analysing and interpreting research data was informed by a social constructivist worldview. This paradigm was chosen as this study sought to gain understanding of the phenomenon of TV news watching by focusing on *Nasional 8*. This is done by collecting data through a qualitative approach that focused on face-to-face interview with selected informants from urban and suburban Malays in Peninsular Malaysia. The selection of Malays as the informants of this research is to better understand a specific demographic group of RTM *Nasional 8* news audience. As the Malays make up the majority of RTM's audiences, their opinions – particularly among the urbanites – are considered helpful in gathering initial findings on this topic. Hence, the researchers argue that Malay audiences' television viewing pattern can potentially contribute to the audiences' development especially in Peninsular Malaysia.

Prior to the interviewing process, the purposive sampling was used in selecting informants. The non-random sampling procedure was well recognised given that the focus of the study is on a specific group (Croucher & Cronn-Mills, 2015; Neuman, 2014). After all, Miles and Huberman (1984) and Patton (1990, as cited by Lindlof 1995) concurred that most sampling techniques in qualitative inquiry depend not on principles of random probability, but on purposeful selection (p.126).

The main criterion determined for this research is a person who watches RTM *Nasional 8*. Apart from this, the sample of informants were selected on these requirements:

- Malaysian adult, aged between 18 years-old and above;
- Individuals who often watch television news, at least more than three times a week; and
- Fluent in the Malay language as RTM uses Malay language as their primary language.

Based on these specific criteria, a pilot test was initially conducted with a selected female candidate. According to Mohd Alif et al. (2017), piloting for interviews is crucial to test the set of questions and to get some practices and experiences in interviewing. In return, the test proved to contribute to the forming of a more precise research instrument and an initial overview on the behaviours involved in the watching of TV news programme as a whole.

Six informants were successfully identified for this particular study. The total number of necessary informants to be studied was based on points of data saturation. Saturation, as it pertains to qualitative research, constitutes a guideline and a limit where a researcher considers to have reached the research objectives when there are no newer codes or themes that are emerging from his data analysis (Saunders et al., 2017). Therefore,

to reflect the points of data saturation, this research has started to notice a pattern of repetition of answers from the interviews from its fourth and fifth informants.

Prior to gathering interview data, the reliability and the validity of the research remain a priority to ensure the quality of the following findings. The interview sessions were recorded before being transcribed. All informants were duly informed about the research prior to the interviews, so that they are able to offer more relevant details and opinions on the subject matter.

The data analysis process for this qualitative study involved examining, sorting, categorising, evaluating, comparing, synthesising, contemplating the coded data as well as reviewing the raw and recorded data (Nueman, 2014). Thus, to easily conduct the analysis, NVivo 12 Plus was used, specifically to organise the raw materials and in the coding process using a thematic analysis approach.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In line with the identified criteria, all the research informants were familiar with RTM and its programmes, which included *Nasional 8*. They watch the news to be updated on current issues, and as it is their mother tongue, *Nasional 8*'s medium of Malay language makes it easier for them to be informed on the latest developments. Nonetheless, they also cited other elements that appealed to their choice of watching the programme.

One particular element concerned the news anchors. The informants recognised the new style of TV news anchors, in which the latter were described to have good presentation skills that make programme more meaningful and alive. As one informant described:

The Nasional 8 also has changed in terms of their news presentation. The TV anchors now are more relax and their reading is good even the visuals are also interesting. (Female 3)

With respect to the usage of Malay, informants perceive this as part of preserving the National Language, which is an important symbol of unity among Malaysians:

Given that the news is presented in Malay Language, so, it is surely important for the Malaysian unity. (Male 6)

Meanwhile, in terms of media consumption, the informants appear to have adapted with other media as well to meet their needs for information. Specifically, they consume news across three main activities. The themes that emerged include 'surfing new media', 'watching TV news' and 'use both media at once' while watching *Nasional 8*.

Interview findings suggest that informants surf new media because of its 'convenience' and to satisfy their 'democratisation of information'. The new media is regarded as fast and useful for all purposes. As quoted from one female informant, aged 39:

Sometimes, when we watch TV, there are more ads than news. However, when we watch TV over a smartphone, we can directly choose the type of news that we want to watch. (Female 5)

In respect of watching TV, the majority of informants remain consistent with the conventional opinion that traditional media of television is the essential medium for truthful, reliable and credible information or news. They admit watching television news programme on a state-owned station, RTM, due to its high news values. The findings can be corroborated with findings from past research (see Salman et al. (2011); Wok et al. (2011)) that found Malaysians' reliance on television news is largely due to its higher credibility. As one informant detailed:

The news is more valid if it appears on TV, especially if it appears on credible channels such as RTM's TV1 or Media Prima owned TV3 and TV9 as well as Astro Awani. (Male 1)

In addition, the 'watching TV news activity' is also associated with informants choosing to be selective on news aired due to the commercial break. In addition, most of the TV stations often broadcast similar news contents, while some of the informants also consider watching TV news as an activity that is like a learning process in their life as parents have taught them before, as one informant explained below:

Maybe it's due to my background. When I was young, I mostly watched news programmes. Back then, my family especially my late father used to watch RTM a lot. So, every time when we watched the news, it would be Nasional 8 on TV1. (Male 1)

Apart from that, the *Nasional 8* audiences also use both media at once, in the sense of using new media particularly the smartphone while watching TV news. They cited wanting to know more information and to share them as they are watching TV as their reasons for also utilising smartphones. The two informants below – aged 36 and 40 years-old respectively – elaborated upon this:

When we watch news on TV, we have the tendency to comment, discuss and share the news with others. (Female 3)

I usually focus on the news, but I admit that at the same time, I like to get confirmation of other information. (Male 4)

Informants' experience indicate that watching TV activity merely for news is no longer effective as audiences now have access to a multitude of platforms on which to consume news, particularly by using social media. Yet, as has been remarked previously, TV news is still considered to be the medium on which valid news are broadcast. Therefore, to find a balance between convenience and the need for credibility, audiences often use two media at once – they watch TV while at the same surf their social media platforms. Another way of explaining this trend is that audiences still need to know information from TV news, but social media allows them to find out further information as well as share the news. Besides this, across many households, watching prime time TV news activity could be presumed as preserving a family pastime, whereby parents spend quality time with their children.

The second objective of this research concerned with the significant value of *Nasional 8* to the audience. Several themes emerged from the interview findings – it is 'news value', 'chasing advancement', 'talking point' and 'nation-building catalyst'.

The majority of informants agreed that *Nasional 8* provides reliable news or information to the masses. As the programme is broadcast by a reputable state-owned media institution, RTM, the content is deemed to be credible to the informants. Furthermore, they stated that *Nasional 8* can act as a verifier of dubious information. One male informant explained as follows:

If you are comparing it to other news or online news programmes, the differences definitely on the content. RTM owned news validity and advantage as a government broadcaster. (Male 1)

The theme 'chasing advancement' refers to *Nasional 8's* commitment to keep up to the latest developments in media technologies. A female informant acknowledged that the programme is working at their best to catch-up with rapid changes in the communication field:

For the young people with the mobile phones can watch through the online, as I was recently when watching the closing ceremony of Para Games, by surfing Myklik. (Female 3)

Meanwhile, two research informants admitted that they often experienced the situation whereby the news on *Nasional 8* became a talking point within their respective social circles. The news is discussed among family members and friends, which can be considered as a reflection of the importance and pertinence of the role of *Nasional 8* in society. The informants are quoted as follows:

Families will become closer together that they will talk to each other and thus, get closer to the news. (Male 2)

If the story of Anwar Ibrahim is free from prison, everyone will speak on about Anwar Ibrahim free from prison. (Male 1)

All informants also acknowledged the significant role of *Nasional 8* as a catalyst for national development, which they believe would often be kick-started from the RTM prime time news programme itself. An unemployed male informant, aged 42, explained further:

The programme can inculcate unity and live without prejudice to one another, thus Malaysian can live together. (Male 6)

From the aforesaid statement by informants, it appeared that the programme remains strong and relevant due to its reputation. This is a result of its high values of news content and its tireless effort to pursue advancement in media technology. Furthermore, the programme constantly demonstrates quality given that it is depicted as a source of daily conversation among the members of the informants' social circles. In determining the importance of *Nasional 8*, however, the programme's obligation towards its objective of nation-building should not be relegated. As part of this obligation, it is hence considered a duty for audiences to support the national agenda that are broadcast by RTM through the programme.

Finally, as this research attempted to examine the engagement between *Nasional 8* and its audiences, several themes emerged from the findings.

The most prominent emergent theme suggests the *Nasional 8* viewer as an active participant who consumes and also contributes to *Nasional 8's* social media presence and influence. These participants voluntarily contribute to the discussions on social media, including *Nasional 8's* official social media platforms. They feel belonged and responsible for the success or failure of *Nasional 8*. They feel obligated to support and advocate for this prime time news programme. Two informants exhibited this response in their quotes below:

I use social media to inform or to provide occasional feedback because sometimes the production can't see the real issues behind Nasional 8. (Male 1)

Sometimes when there is a mistake in the fact we print screen with the intention of notifying the station that there is an error. (Male 4)

Several informants also admitted to having responded towards the news broadcasted on *Nasional 8*. Sharing information pertaining to *Nasional 8* with others, for example family and friends, proved the informants' media receptivity in making sense of the information they received from the news programmes. Their implicit involvement with *Nasional 8* by means of a responsive act indicate their natural attitude in the sense of accepting the programme from a positive side. Two female informants elaborated upon this further:

As we have seen the transformation in the Nasional 8 on TV, so, we felt it should be shared with people, with friends. (Female 3)

Response is indeed important, so that both can make improvements from time to time. (Female 5)

On the 'passive reaction' theme, more than half of the informants refused to be directly engage with *Nasional 8*, as expressed by two male informants:

I am passive; I will not give my feedback because I knew that every initial change came from upper management. (Male 1)

When I watch the news, I never felt to share anything maybe because I watch it alone. So, I just take the news from a positive side. (Male 6)

Therefore, in respect of the audience engagement with *Nasional 8*, perhaps it is worthwhile for the programme to continue enhancing their collaboration with audiences in the sense of having a long-term improvement plan. By having a proper guideline, *Nasional 8* not only could increase its viewer ratings, but at the same time increase direct participation from all level of viewers.

Nasional 8 should be made aware with people's sense of belonging to the programme, by understanding and meeting their need. It is plausible for *Nasional 8* to follow the audience market today in the midst of all media companies sharing Malaysian audiences' market's pie, which is relatively small.

As to cater to the market's need and in line with the current environment on media technologies, *Nasional 8* must make full use of social media to engage with its viewers. Despite the numerous potential danger posed by the use of social media, such as the dissemination of fake new that can undermine public confidence, it remains a useful tool.

However, provided with certain guidelines and regulations from the management, *Nasional 8* can potentially avoid negative response, and progress to becoming more influential than before in delivering reliable news and information.

IV. CONCLUSION

The findings of this research have revealed numerous areas for future study that can be explored on the topic of *Nasional 8* specifically, and news watching, more generally. Given that the present study focuses on qualitative approach, future research can further this topic through quantitative means. The quantitative approach provides a different form of analysis, with a more substantial pool of respondents.

In addition, due to particular limitations of this study, it is recommended that other crucial points may be addressed in future research. For example, studies that include candidates from different ethnicities and from different socio-economic backgrounds, such as those who reside in rural areas. By extending the research to include other ethnicities and socio-demographic backgrounds it could generate detailed data in reflecting the reality of a multi-racial Malaysian society. It is also recommended that future research focus on looking at the suggestions that may help television companies to increase their engagement with their targeted audience.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Albarran, A. B., 2013. *Management of Electronic and Digital Media*. Singapore: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- [2]. Bernama, 2018. *RTM Should Have More Aggressive Image In Sixth Month*. [Online] Available at: <http://blis.bernama.com.ezaccess.library.uitm.edu.my/>
- [3]. Chamil, W., 2008. *Penulisan Berkesan: Media Cetak, Elektronik dan Web*. Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Press Institute.
- [4]. Chamil, W., 2010. *Memapar Realiti: Prinsip-prinsip Utama dan Asas Kewartawanan Siaran*. Petaling Jaya: Malaysian Press Institute.
- [5]. Chinnsamy, S., 2017. *New Media Political Participation and Engagement in Malaysia*. New York: Routledge.
- [6]. Cheng, M.-H., Wu, Y.-C. & Chen, M.-C., 2016. Television Meets Facebook: The Correlation between TV Ratings and Social Media. *American Journal of Industrial and Business Management*, 6(3), pp. 282-290.
- [7]. Croucher, S. M. & Cronn-Mills, D., 2015. *Understanding Communication Research Methods*. New York: Routledge.
- [8]. Dunlap, L. R., 1992. *New and different or simply new: An intercultural analysis of government and private television news in Malaysia*, Indiana: Proquest Dissertation Publishing.
- [9]. Fakhar, N., 2011. *Radio News: Definition, Scope and Characteristics..* [Online] Available at: www.masscommunicationtalk.com
- [10]. Freeman, K. S., 2013. News Consumption Behavior of Young Adults in Malaysia. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, 3(2), pp. 121-124.
- [11]. Green, M., 1969. *Television News: Anatomy and Process*. California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc..
- [12]. Gunter, B., 1987. *Poor Reception: Misunderstanding and Forgetting Broadcast News*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc..
- [13]. Halbrooks, G., 2018. *How Primetime Television is Changing*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/>
- [14]. Lindlof, T. R., 1995. *Qualitative communication research methods*. California: Sage Publications, Inc..
- [15]. Lopez-Garcia, X., Rodriguez-Vasquez, A.-I. & Pereira-Fanna, X., 2017. Technological Skills and New Professional Profiles: Present Challenges for Journalism. *Media Education Research Journal*, 25(53), pp. 81-90.
- [16]. Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, 2015. *Internet Survey 2014*, Cyberjaya: Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission.
- [17]. Manning, P., 2001. *News and News Sources A Critical Introduction*. London: SAGE Publication Ltd.

- [18]. Matsa, K. E., 2018. *Fewer Americans Rely on TV News, What Type They Watch Varies by Who They Are*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/>
- [19]. Mayer, J., 2011. *A Culture of Audience Engagement in the News Industry*. [Online] Available at: <https://search.proquest.com.ezaccess.library.uitm.edu.my>
- [20]. Ministry of Communication and Multimedia Malaysia, 2016. *Kajian Sambutan Masyarakat Terhadap Siaran Berita & Ehwat Semasa di TV dan Radio RTM 2016*, Kuala Lumpur: KKMM.
- [21]. Mohd Alif, A. M; Mohhidin, O; Siti Fatimah, M; Sarina, A. H. L; Aziz, Y., 2017. Piloting for Interviews in Qualitative Research: Operationalization and Lessons Learnt. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 7(4), pp. 1073-1080.
- [22]. Muhamed Yunus, A. J.; Hashim, J.; Mohd Nordin, R.; Ahmed, H., 2010. *RTM Merentas Zaman*. Kuala Lumpur: Jabatan Penyiaran Malaysia.
- [23]. Neuman, W. L., 2014. *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- [24]. Nielsen Holdings plc, 2018. *Media Landscape 2017 - Snapshot: An Overview of Malaysian Consumers & Their Media Consumption Behaviour*, s.l.: s.n.
- [25]. Nielsen, 2011. *What Hour Puts the Prime in Primetime for Asia Pacific Viewers*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nielsen.com/>
- [26]. Noble, H. & Smith, J., 2015. Issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research. *BMJ*, 18(2), pp. 34-35.
- [27]. Patterson, P. & Wilkins, L., 2014. *Media Ethics: Issues & Cases*. Singapore: McGraw-Hill Education.
- [28]. Radio Televisyen Malaysia, 2016. *Vision, Mission & Objective*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.rtm.gov.my/en/about-us/vision-mission-objective>
- [29]. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 2017. *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2017*, s.l.: s.n.
- [30]. Richard, W. & Lynn, T. H., 2018. *Introducing Communication Theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill Education.
- [31]. Rosli, H. F.; Wan Mahmud, W. A; Mahbob, M. H., 2017. The Role of Media in Community Awareness Towards the Right of Person with Disabilities. *Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 7(1), pp. 67-73.
- [32]. Salman, A; Ibrahim, F; Abdullah, M. Y; Mustafa, N; Mahbob, M. H., 2011. The Impact of New Media on Traditional Mainstream Mass Media. *The Innovation Journal*, 16(3), pp. 1-11.
- [33]. Saunders, B.; Sim, J.; Kingstone, T.; Baker, S.; Waterfield, J.; Bartlam, B., Burroughs, H.; Jinks, C., 2018. Saturation in Qualitative Research: Exploring Its Conceptualization and Operationalization.. *Quality and Quantity: International Journal of Methodology*, 52(4), pp. 1893-1907.
- [34]. Schwab, K., 2016. *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*. Geneva: World Economic Forum.
- [35]. The Sun Daily, 2018. *RTM should have more aggressive image in 6 months: Gobind Singh*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.thesundaily.my>
- [36]. Thompson, R., 2010. *Writing for Broadcast Journalists 2nd Edition*. New York: Routledge.
- [37]. Utusan Online, 2009. *Berita bahasa Melayu RTM kembali pukul 8 malam*. [Online] Available at: <http://ww1.utusan.com.my/>
- [38]. Wok, S., Tamam, E., Bolong, J. & Ahmad, A. M., 2011. Patterns of News Media Consumption and News Discussion among Youth: A Test of Agenda Setting Theory. *Global Media Journal - Malaysia Edition*, 1(1), pp. 1-31.
- [39]. Wonneberger, A. & Ju, K. S., 2017. TV News Exposure of Young People in Changing Viewing Environments: A Longitudinal, Cross-National Comparison Using People-Meter Data. *International Journal of Communication Systems*, 11(1), pp. 72-93.

Appendix

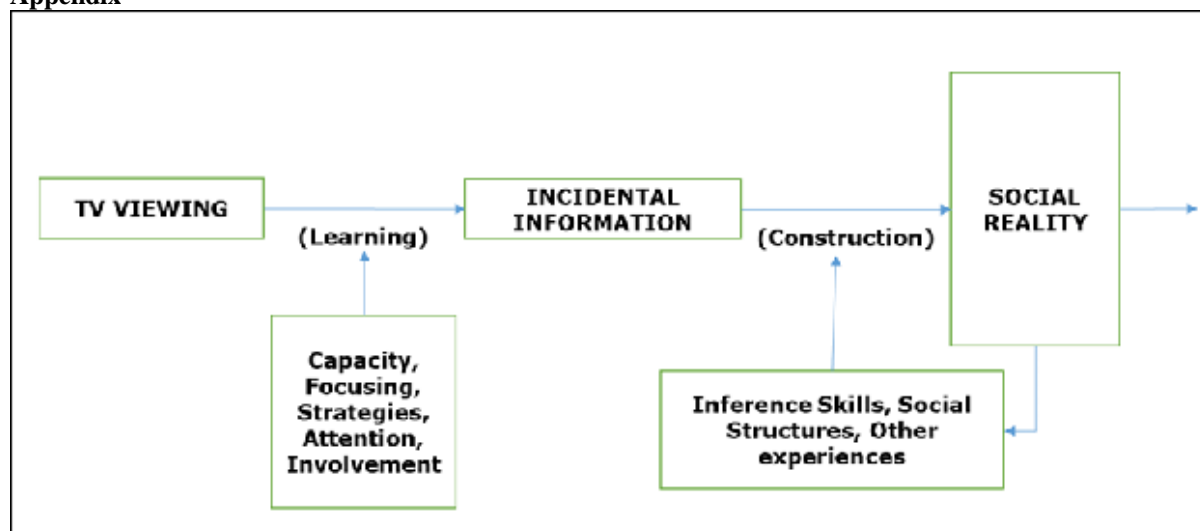


Figure 1 The early model of the Cultivation Theory
 Source: Taken from (Rosli, et. al., 2017)

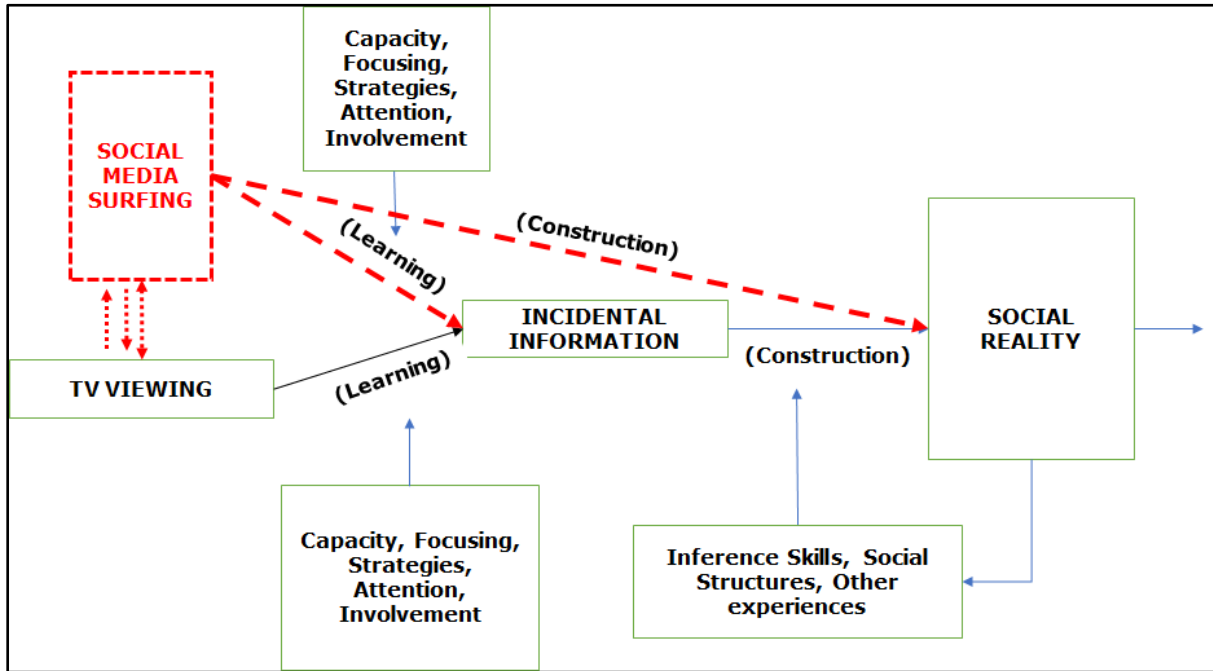


Figure 2 The Expansion of Cultivation Theory Model by authors